in which, according to Eckstein, Babbitt refused to delay issuance of the decision because Ickes "had called the Secretary and told him that the decision had to be issued that day." The strong implication of the article was that campaign contributions and pledges of contributions had caused the White House to intercede in the Department's consideration of the application.

Thereafter, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), wrote letters on July 19, 1996, to Secretary Babbitt, Deputy Chief of Staff Ickes and President Clinton seeking answers to a series of questions about possible impropriety in the decision on the Hudson casino application. In particular, Sen. McCain focused on the allegation that campaign contributions, or promises to make such contributions, led the White House to pressure Interior to deny the application. McCain asked specific questions about Babbitt's statements to Eckstein and about White House and DNC involvement in Indian matters.

Secretary Babbitt responded to Sen. McCain in a letter dated Aug. 30, 1996. In the letter, Babbitt denied knowledge of any attempt to influence improperly the decision-making of the Department on the Hudson proposal, and asserted that his staff was likewise unaware of those efforts. With respect to Eckstein's allegations about their meeting, Babbitt stated:

> I must regretfully dispute Mr. Eckstein's assertion that I told him that Mr. Ickes instructed me to issue a decision in this matter without delay. I never discussed the matter with Mr. Ickes; he never gave me any instructions as to what this Department's decision should be, nor when it should be made.

In a reply letter, Sen. McCain said that he was satisfied by Secretary Babbitt's explanation.

During 1997, the media reported a number of alleged improprieties relating to campaign fund-raising by the Democratic Party during the 1996 elections. Although the allegations encompassed a variety of matters, many shared the common theme that access to or influence